

CONCEPT PAPER

Expanding Regional Participation and Information In California Water Plan Updates

California Water Plan Update 2005 (Bulletin 160-05) recommends the next Water Plan Update incorporate regional information and approaches and specifically:

- Expand the participation of regional water planning efforts to improve the quantitative analysis of the Water Plan Update
- Provide better information on the status of integrated regional water planning and management in each region of the state
- Improve the discussion of regional needs, accomplishments, lessons learned, and best practices in the Water Plan's Regional Reports

During Fall, 2005, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) convened a public workshop on the topic. Staff also interviewed key regional leaders and DWR and other state agency staff to gather ideas on the best ways to expand regional participation and information in Water Plan updates. These conversations yielded the following ideas.

Goals

1. Create two-way communication with ongoing and emerging regional water planning efforts to improve regional input, data and information for Water Plan products, and thereby make Water Plan products and recommendations more effective and useful.
2. Better leverage resources of all agencies through collaboration and cooperation
3. Identify efficient and practical organizational structures to facilitate communication and cooperation: (1) between ongoing and emerging regional planning efforts and the public process to update the California Water Plan; (2) among State government agencies; and (3) among regional entities.

California Water Plan Products and Processes

DWR believes work with regions on the following Water Plan products and processes will substantially improve the quality of Water Plan updates and California water management in general:

- Definitions and Glossary
- Data guidelines and methods to improve data exchanges
- Analytical tools to evaluate strategies, scenarios and tradeoffs
- Regional Water Portfolios (historic water uses, supplies and management)
- Regional Reports (information on regional water issues, challenges, accomplishments, lessons learned, and best practices)
- Regional Response Packages (mixes of management strategies) for various baseline scenarios
- State government provides technical and facilitation assistance to regions

Principles

DWR seeks efficient and practical ways to interact with and among regional water planning efforts for the purpose of (1) updating the California Water Plan and (2) promoting integrated regional water management. The following principles can help establish and maintain State-Regional partnerships:

Streamlined, Leveraged and Efficient

Avoid new hierarchy and bureaucracy. Utilize and create better communication and exchange with regional efforts and organizations already engaged on these issues. Encourage the recognition and integration of regional planning with other appropriate planning processes within the region.

Incentives for Participation

Create incentives for participation, in support of and to the groups themselves. Identify benefits that regional groups can receive as a result of participation. When no existing regional structure is in place, provide technical and organizational support to create regional capacity for collaboration.

Honor Sovereignty

Participants retain full sovereignty over their own decision processes. No authority is ceded by a decision to participate.

Synergistic, Interactive, 2-Way Communication Flow

Honor and facilitate partnerships. The interactions with and among the regions and State government are compatible and benefit all the parties. Information is iterative and two-way.

Approach

1. Staged Work Plan

- Use the next Water Plan Update to phase in a regional approach for statewide water planning. There needs to be a realistic, staged work plan.
- Restate the idea of long-term and future
- Look to build future capacity in regions

2. Inventory of Existing Efforts

- What kinds of regional efforts and plans are being put together?
- What are the lessons learned and best practices emerging from regional planning efforts
- Could DWR establish a central clearinghouse to make the activities in the different regions available statewide?
- Do existing planning efforts provide educational opportunities?

3. Voluntary Participation – No Mandates

4. Self-Organizing

- Set out general parameters and guidelines for participation (along with incentives).
- Acknowledge the diversity in regional planning efforts and allow the regions to determine the best way to interact with State government.

Sample General Guidelines

Voluntary Participation Guidelines

Define basics of voluntary participation (if you want to work together, these are things to think about)

1. Representative Membership
2. Ground rules and where appropriate any potential decision rules
3. Recognition of and collaboration with other appropriate State, federal and local planning processes within the region.
4. Educational component to develop a common understanding of integrated regional water planning.

Protocol Guidelines

Some data protocols will be more usable than others. Define and where possible use protocols that are transportable.

5. DWR Role

- In collaboration with regions, clearly define region-based Water Plan information, products and expected outcomes (for example Urban Water Management Plans, Agricultural Water Management Plans, IRWM Plans, etc.).
- Assess the internal capacity of DWR to support and analyze regional water planning processes. Realign internal resources and build additional capacity to support integrated regional water management and planning.
- Ensure State government internal leadership provides consistency among State agencies and among different programs within State agencies. Work with other State agencies for a common approach to regional planning.
- Actively involve other State and federal agencies in Water Plan updates.
- Establish transparent data and assumptions that support interactive planning processes and make information more helpful to others. Articulate and provide protocol guidelines.
- Where requested, assist with conflict resolution.
- Create communication systems for regional dialogue to occur and be communicated to State government.
- Create communication systems for State government feedback to the Regions.
- Provide for Transfer of Knowledge (TOK) sessions to share best practices and information among the state and ongoing regional planning efforts.
- Identify incentives to increase regional participation and offer possible financial support where needed.
- Educational outreach and capacity building to the regions, especially those without adequate planning processes. Make sure communities are not left behind.

6. Geographic Zones

- Address how to manage work associated with overlaps or no coverage. (Questions: What are options for areas with no interest in voluntary participation? How will federal management issues be incorporated?)
- Where possible, incorporate existing state/regional efforts for both water and other resource issues.
- Find ways to prepare and implement integrated regional water management plans on a watershed (hydrologic) basis.

7. Organizational Considerations

- Form follows function. Allow the regional structure to respond to the functions that are needed from it. Spend time on setting up a very clear goal and mission so that the design will achieve the intended outcome.
- Use existing, and create new, communications systems to support existing efforts where they are.
- Consider the amount of time people can commit to the Water Plan process, in addition to geographical and political considerations.
- Define partnerships that allow input on different aspects of the Water Plan, particularly technical versus policy. Accommodate analysis at various geographic scales.
- Develop appropriate measures to provide funding in a sustainable way to disadvantaged areas and interests to participate in the Water Plan update.

Performance Measures**Near-Term Measures of Success**

- Clearly defined end goals, deliverables, needed region-based information and products, and ways to evaluate progress for the next Water Plan Update
- Completion of Water Plan products for next Update
- Completed inventory of regional water planning processes and information sources
- Water Plan's regional process/partnerships in place by end of next Update

Long-Term Measures of Success

- Greater use of regional information in Water Plan updates
- Greater use of Water Plan Update products and processes by regional and local agencies and governments
- Adoption of Water Plan glossary and definitions by water community
- Adoption of Water Plan data guidelines and protocols for information exchange
- Regional water planning efforts use analytical tools and baseline scenarios developed for the Water Plan to evaluate different response packages
- Ongoing, integrated, sustainable, collaborative regional planning processes and implementation of successful projects and programs, with State government as a partner.
- Organizational structures to facilitate communication and input to Water Plan products and recommendations at both the statewide and regional levels

Items for Future Discussion

1. Considering ways to modernize Water Code sections on the California Water Plan
2. Identifying existing regional and State water planning efforts and processes; and considering how to engage areas that are not in an ongoing regional planning effort
3. How to make a persuasive argument for greater and continued regional participation; and considering what happens if/when regional entities choose not to participate in the Water Plan update process and/or use Water Plan products
4. Identifying the communities of place and communities of interest that need to be involved in updating the Water Plan
5. Addressing culture change issues and change management planning within State government and between State and Regional planning processes
6. Describing the various aspects of integration needed for integrated regional water management to be effective: ways to regionally integrate institutions, integrate resources management, integrate data/analytical tools, and integrate watersheds
7. Considering how to integrate the regulatory and oversight processes of State government with regional water planning and management
8. Creating long-term capacity in regions
9. Identifying ways to provide funding and resources

Next Steps

1. Receive feedback from the Water Plan Advisory Committee on December 9
2. Form an ad hoc working group to deliberate on the future discussion items above, look at implementation of features, and refine this concept paper to expand regional participation and information in the next Water Plan update
3. Conduct DWR internal information meetings to discuss improved regional approaches and how to involve its District (regional) offices.
4. Conduct State agency information meeting to discuss ways to improve State government coordination on water planning and regional participation.
5. Conduct information meetings with existing regional planning efforts
6. Develop a work plan for an inventory of current planning processes and various reports now being done in the regions.